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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999*

Part VI Human rights and humanitarian affairs

Section 23
Protection of and assistance to refugees
(Programme 21 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001)

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* The present document contains section 23 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. The complete proposed programme budget will subsequently be issued in final printed form as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/52/6/Rev.1).

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Section 23
Protection of and assistance to refugees
(Programme 21 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001)

Overview

23.1 The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is responsible for the implementation of the programme. The Office was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 319 A (IV) of 3 December 1949 and its statute was approved by the Assembly in resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950. Subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Committee of UNHCR have called on the Office, in the context of its basic mandate, to assist other groups of persons regarded as falling within the competence of the High Commissioner.

23.2 The overall objective of UNHCR is to provide international protection to refugees and to seek durable solutions to refugee problems. UNHCR is required to safeguard the fundamental principles of asylum and non-refoulement and to ensure that the basic rights of refugees are respected and that they are treated in a decent and humane manner. As regards UNHCR assistance activities, the basic provisions of the statute were expanded by the General Assembly in its resolution 832 (IX) of 21 October 1954. The Assembly has also called upon the High Commissioner to provide assistance to returnees, as well as to monitor their safety and well-being on return (resolution 40/118). In addition, on the basis of specific requests from the Secretary-General or the competent principal organs of the United Nations and with the consent of the State concerned, UNHCR provides humanitarian assistance and protection to internally displaced persons (resolution 48/116). In complex humanitarian emergencies, UNHCR, in addition to discharging its particular international protection mandate, also contributes to the provision of humanitarian assistance coordinated by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator according to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991.

23.3 The UNHCR programme of work during the biennium 1998-1999 will focus, in varying and largely unpredictable situations, on the following: (a) the pursuit of comprehensive strategies, in cooperation with States and other organizations, aimed at both mitigating and preventing the causes of forced population movements as well as finding solutions to them when they occur; (b) the ongoing development of a legal regime of international protection, in particular through the promotion of accessions to international and regional instruments relating to the status of refugees or otherwise benefiting refugees, the effective implementation of refugee rights and the promotion and dissemination of principles of refugee law and protection; (c) the further development of contingency planning, emergency preparedness and response capabilities, in coordination with other organizations, so as to respond effectively and efficiently to situations of forced human displacement; (d) the provision of humanitarian assistance in an environmentally sensitive manner and in such a way that it is supportive of and reinforces development initiatives to the extent possible; in addition, a concerted effort will be made to ensure that in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the particular needs and capacities of refugee women will be taken into account, as well as the special situation of refugee children; and (e) the systematic follow-up to relevant recommendations in the plans of action emanating from recent international conferences.

23.4 The Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1166 (XII) of 26 November 1957 to advise the High Commissioner in the exercise of his/her functions and to approve the use of extrabudgetary funds made

available to the High Commissioner. The annual cycle of meetings of the Executive Committee consists of a one-week annual plenary session and a number of inter-sessional meetings of a Standing Committee of the Whole. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/72 of 12 December 1996, the membership of the Executive Committee has been increased from 51 to 53 member countries starting in 1997. Reports on the sessions of the Executive Committee are submitted to the General Assembly as addenda to the reports of the High Commissioner.

23.5 The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provides overall direction, supervision and management of the activities under this Programme. The High Commissioner is elected by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Secretary-General. The functions of the High Commissioner are set out in the annex to the statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The High Commissioner is assisted by a Deputy High Commissioner and an Assistant High Commissioner. The Director of the Inspection and Evaluation Service also reports directly to the High Commissioner.

Table 23.1 **Summary of requirements by component**
(Thousands of United States dollars)

(1) *Regular budget*

Object of expenditure	*1994-1995 expenditures*	*1996-1997 appropriations*	*Resource growth*		*Total before recosting*	*Recosting*	*1998-1999 estimates*
			Amount	*Percentage*			
Posts	51 329.5	50 073.4	(1 864.4)	(3.7)	48 209.0	(873.4)	47 335.6
Other staff costs	231.8	65.7	1 954.3		2 020.0	(11.4)	2 008.6
General operating expenses	—	—	1 142.0	—	1 142.0	(5.8)	1 136.2
Supplies and materials	—	—	88.8	—	88.8	(0.5)	88.3
Total	**51 561.3**	**50 139.1**	**1 320.7**	**2.6**	**51 459.8**	**(891.1)**	**50 568.7**

(2) *Extrabudgetary resources*

1994-1995 expenditures	*1996-1997 estimates*	*Object of expenditure*	*1998-1999 estimates*
412 054.6	512 095.3	Posts	439 516.5
32 028.0	17 206.4	Other staff costs	18 432.3
8 229.4	1 870.5	Consultants and experts	1 888.8
36 144.4	34 748.9	Travel	40 826.4
8 967.1	16 845.5	Contractual services	9 300.0
76 484.9	88 640.3	General operating expenses	91 953.3
11 199.9	15 528.4	Supplies and materials	16 613.9
44 560.1	27 029.4	Furniture and equipment	28 229.3
1 676 695.6	1 833 085.4	Other expenditure	1 641 131.3
2 306 364.0	**2 547 050.1**	**Total**	**2 287 891.8**
2 357 925.3	**2 597 189.2**	**Total (1) and (2)**	**2 338 460.5**

Table 23.2 **Post requirements**

Organizational unit: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

	Established posts		*Temporary posts*					
	Regular budget		*Regular budget*		*Extrabudgetary resources*		*Total*	
	1996-1997	*1998-1999*	*1996-1997*	*1998-1999*	*1996-1997*	*1998-1999*	*1996-1997*	*1998-1999*
Professional category and above								
USG	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	1
ASG	1	1	—	—	1	1	2	2
D-2	2	2	—	—	18	18	20	20
D-1	10	10	—	—	48	48	58	58
P-5	19	19	—	—	138	134	157	153
P-4/3	41	41	—	—	970	951	1 011	992
P-2/1	15	15	—	—	197	121	212	136
Total	**89**	**89**	**—**	**—**	**1 272**	**1 273**	**1 461**	**1 362**
General Service category								
Principal level	4	4	—	—	48	47	52	51
Other levels	151	127	—	—	273	259	424	386
Total	**155**	**131**	**—**	**—**	**321**	**306**	**476**	**437**
Other categories								
Security Services	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Local level	—	—	—	—	3 551	3 400	3 551	3 400
Field Service	—	—	—	—	79	77	79	77
Total	**—**	**—**	**—**	**—**	**3 630**	**3 477**	**3 630**	**3 477**
Grand total	**244**	**220**	**—**	**—**	**5 323**	**5 056**	**5 567**	**5 276**

Programme of work

23.6 The programme of work is implemented at UNHCR headquarters and in the field through the Executive Office, supported by the Directors of the Divisions of International Protection, Financial and Information Services, Operational Support and Human Resources Management, and 8 operations (Europe; the Americas; Central, East and West Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Central Asia, South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East; the Great Lakes region of Africa; southern Africa; and the former Yugoslavia). In support of these 8 operations, which cover some 210 offices, there are 17 regional representatives and 103 country representatives who act on behalf of the High Commissioner in all aspects of the Office's activities in the country or countries to which they are accredited.

23.7 Of direct relevance to the programme is the change management process that UNHCR launched in late 1995 under the name Project Delphi. This process is aimed at ensuring a major overhaul of the way UNHCR goes about its work; its aim is to improve the delivery, accountability and performance of the Office. The Plan of Action presented to the fourth meeting of the Standing Committee of UNHCR in 1996 sets out a series of detailed objectives in this regard. These are of direct relevance to the way UNHCR will be able to deliver its programme in the biennium 1998-1999.

23.8 Within the programme of work, the estimated percentage distribution of resources among subprogrammes would be as follows:

	Regular budget	Extra-budgetary
	(percentage)	
Subprogramme 1 International protection	1.1	0.6
Subprogramme 2 Assistance	98.9	99.4
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**

Subprogramme 1
International protection

23.9 The objectives of this subprogramme are:

(a) To promote further acceptance of the existing international or regional legal instruments and to elaborate new instruments;

(b) To promote the inclusion of provisions favourable to refugees in international and regional instruments and in national legislation;

(c) To explore the development of further measures, consistent with fundamental protection principles reflected in international instruments and to ensure international protection to all who need it;

(d) To ensure the effective implementation of refugee rights through the widest possible observance by States of internationally accepted standards for the treatment of refugees, especially the fundamental principles of asylum and non-refoulement, and respect of the rights of refugee women and refugee children;

(e) Actively to promote accessions to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;

(f) To promote and disseminate principles of refugee law and their protection, in particular through the training, in cooperation with non-governmental, academic institutions and other relevant organizations, of governmental and non-governmental officials;

(g) To search for permanent solutions to the problems of refugees, especially through the elaboration of comprehensive and regional approaches for resolving refugee problems.

Activities

23.10 During the biennium the following activities will be undertaken:

(a) Servicing of intergovernmental/expert bodies

(i) Substantive servicing of meetings. Annual sessions of the Executive Committee and two sessions of the Standing Committee of the Whole on international protection issues;

(ii) Parliamentary documentation. Two issues of *Note on International Protection* and five conference room papers on specific protection topics;

(b) Other substantive activities

(i) Recurrent publications. Maintenance and update of the two volume *Collection of International Instruments and other Legal Texts Concerning Refugees and Displaced Persons* and the preparation of a French version; one issue of *The State of the World's Refugees* and *Refugee Survey Quarterly*;

(ii) Technical material. Maintenance of database of accessions, declarations and reservations made by States to over 100 international instruments concerning refugees; and maintenance of some 14 databases known collectively as REFWORLD, which includes country reports, case law, legal instruments and legislation. REFWORLD is available over the Internet on CDROM;

(iii) Other services provided. It is estimated that the Office will provide some 7,500 travel documents in the course of the biennium to assist Governments in the implementation of the provision on the rights of travel of refugees as laid down in article 20 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. In some countries, the Office also provides assistance for the issuance of refugee identity cards;

(c) International cooperation and interagency coordination and liaison

(i) As at 31 December 1996, the number of States that had acceded to the principal legal instruments, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol, stood at 133. UNHCR will continue to work closely with the States concerned with regard to the promotion of accessions to the various refugee-related instruments;

(ii) One of the positive developments in refugee protection in recent years has been a willingness by States to address the needs of all persons who require international protection and to develop the necessary tools for such protection. UNHCR has launched a series of informal consultations on this issue and will continue its initiatives on this subject in the biennium 1998-1999;

(iii) UNHCR will continue to work on the issue of the effective implementation of refugee rights. In particular, UNHCR has noted with concern that States are increasingly resorting to detention of asylum-seekers worldwide. In January 1996, the Office issued *UNHCR Guidelines on Detention of Asylum Seekers*, which have been disseminated as an information and discussion tool to UNHCR staff, Governments, non-governmental organizations, private lawyers and academic institutions;

(iv) UNHCR will continue to address the particular needs of refugee women and refugee children, especially through the dissemination and promotion of related UNHCR guidelines *(Sexual Violence against Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention and Response* (Geneva, 1995); and *Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care* (Geneva, 1994);

(v) In accordance with the decisions of the Executive Committee at its forty-sixth session, UNHCR will focus in particular on the promotion of and accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, to which, as at 30 November 1996, there were 46 and 18 accessions, respectively;

(vi) The overarching goal of UNHCR work is the pursuit of durable solutions, in particular through the preferred solution of voluntary repatriation under conditions of safety and dignity. UNHCR, together with other United Nations agencies, will promote the elaboration of comprehensive regional solutions. An example of such an approach is the CIS process under which UNHCR, together with IOM and OSCE and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, worked with interested Governments and intergovernmental organizations in search of a comprehensive approach to the problems of refugees, returnees, displaced persons and other forms of involuntary displacement in the CIS and relevant neighbouring States. A key stage in this process was the regional conference that was held at Geneva on 30 and 31 May 1996, which endorsed a programme of action. UNHCR and IOM have also prepared a follow-up document entitled *A Joint Operational Strategy in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Years 1996 to 2000*;

(vii) Another comparable initiative that has been launched by UNHCR together with the relevant States focuses on the countries of Central and South-West Asia and the Middle East. This region has experienced some of the world's largest and most protracted refugee problems. With the aim of identifying comprehensive regional solutions to refugee problems in the region, the High Commissioner has decided to explore the possibility of a consultative process with a view to developing common humanitarian strategies for solutions to existing problems and to prevent future forced population displacements. A first meeting of the consultative process was held at Amman on 12 and 13 March 1997 to provide the Governments concerned with an opportunity to share their views, refine the objectives of the exercise and formulate a work plan for subsequent consultations;

(d) Technical cooperation. (i) Some 250 training events of government officials and non-governmental implementing partners on refugee law, with an average number of 20-30 participants; (ii) an annual refugee law course organized with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, San Remo, Italy,

with some 50 participants from 30 countries; and (iii) support, at the request of the Government concerned, of national efforts at legal and judicial capacity-building.

Subprogramme 2
Assistance

23.11 UNHCR assistance in response to refugee situations embraces the following: emergency assistance, care and maintenance, local settlement and voluntary repatriation supported by reintegration assistance. In the provision of such assistance, UNHCR ensures that assistance, where possible, is delivered in such a way as to involve the recipients. In particular, it should tap the potentialities of refugee women and should be provided in such a way as to reinforce, rather than undermine, local capacities to cope. Another preoccupation of UNHCR is that assistance programmes should not interfere with or work against the process of sustainable development. The specific objectives of this subprogramme are:

(a) To provide humanitarian assistance in an environmentally sound manner;

(b) To enhance UNHCR emergency preparedness and response mechanisms, bearing in mind the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance by the United Nations;

(c) To pursue collaborative ventures with agencies having complementary mandates or competencies;

(d) To improve the partnership process with its implementing partners, in particular non-governmental organizations;

(e) To ensure a more effective implementation of its policies relating to refugee women and refugee children, even from the early phases of an emergency;

(f) To involve development entities and international financial institutions in elaborating durable solutions to refugee problems.

Activities

23.12 During the biennium the following activities will be undertaken:

(a) Servicing of intergovernmental/expert bodies

(i) Substantive servicing of meetings. Annual session of the Executive Committee; and four sessions of the Standing Committee of the Whole on a range of assistance issues;

(ii) Parliamentary documentation. Two issues of *Overview of UNHCR Activities;* annual series of updates for eight major operations (Europe; the Americas; Central, East and West Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Central Asia, South-West Asia, North Africa and the Middle East; the Great Lakes region of Africa; southern Africa; and the former Yugoslavia); and some 50 other conference room papers on various assistance topics;

(b) Other substantive activities

(i) Recurrent publications. Maintain and update the *UNHCR Manual* and *UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies*; and sectoral guidelines relating to health, water and community services;

(ii) Technical material. Updates of *Partnership: A Programme Management Handbook for UNHCR's partners*; and 40 technical mission reports a year;

(c) International cooperation and interagency coordination and liaison

(i) In pursuit of a sound environmental approach to the delivery of assistance, UNHCR has developed a set of *Environmental Guidelines* that reflect the environmental policy adopted by the Executive Committee at its forty-sixth session. The pursuit of such an approach will require close collaboration among UNHCR, national Governments and development and financial institutions;

(ii) To enhance further its emergency response capability, UNHCR, in close coordination with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, will develop further additional complementary emergency resources in consultation with interested States and non-governmental organizations;

(iii) UNHCR will place greater emphasis on specific preparedness measures at the country level, in particular through joint contingency planning in-country with operational partners, including provision for the integration of local resources into the planned response mechanisms;

(iv) To ensure improved collaboration and coordination with other related agencies in the discharge of its mandate, UNHCR will review and, where necessary, elaborate memoranda of understanding. Such memoranda will aim at ensuring predictable operational inputs to refugee/returnee programmes by those organizations that reflect their mandates and competencies. The agencies of particular significance for UNHCR work include WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIFEM, WHO, IOM and UNDP;

(v) In relation to its non-governmental partners who provide assistance to refugees, UNHCR will review progress on the Partnership in Action Declaration and Plan of Action (Oslo, 1994). The Office will also aim to involve further its implementing partners, both non-governmental and governmental, in programme planning and to ensure that they receive the appropriate training and support to comply with conditions associated with the implementation of projects on behalf of UNHCR. In addition, UNHCR will also improve its procedures to monitor such compliance;

(vi) Relevant policy guidelines have been drawn up to address the specific needs of refugee women and children. The challenge for UNHCR is to give effect to those guidelines in its operations. This objective will be pursued, in particular, through the provision of relevant training and related technical support;

(vii) To underpin durable solutions, in particular voluntary repatriations, UNHCR will seek to strengthen linkages between its reintegration assistance and broader development efforts. The Office will work to develop further its relationship with UNDP, the World Bank and other development and financial institutions;

(d) *Technical cooperation*. To ensure an effective delivery of its assistance and protection programmes, UNHCR makes an important investment in the training of implementing partners. In a given year some 1,750 persons from Governments and non-governmental organizations are trained by the Office.

Resource requirements (at current rates)

23.13 In accordance with article 20 of the statute of UNHCR, the Office is financed under the budget of the United Nations. Unless the General Assembly subsequently decides otherwise, no expenditure other than administrative expenditures relating to the functioning of the Office is borne by the budget of the United Nations and all other expenditures relating to the activities of UNHCR are financed by voluntary contributions. While the statute does not define what is meant by "administrative expenditures", the term, based on a definition offered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in a report submitted to the Assembly at its seventh session (see A/2157, part III), has been interpreted to mean expenses other than operational expenses and the related management costs.

23.14 Following the reduction in the number of posts requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, discussions took place between UNHCR and the Secretariat that resulted in an agreement that a distinction should be made between operational and non-operational support staff, and that operational support staff, including related costs, should be financed exclusively from the voluntary funds administered by the High Commissioner. Because of the financial constraints in the regular budget, it was further agreed that the voluntary funds would also cover non-operational costs in the field, while the United Nations would meet the costs of non-operational staff at UNHCR headquarters at Geneva. Those proposals, which were approved by the Assembly at its forty-fourth session, resulted in maintaining the number of posts to be financed from the regular budget at 244, with a different distribution among grades and with all posts being located at Geneva instead of being distributed between Geneva and field offices. In view of the evolution of UNHCR requirements and the desirability to streamline and simplify

the budgetary process, the funding of UNHCR from the regular budget may be reviewed in the future to determine whether other budgetary arrangements such as a lump sum grant would be administratively more effective.

23.15 For the biennium 1998-1999, it is proposed that 40 per cent of the resources previously provided in the regular budget for administration and management at the United Nations Office at Geneva intended to cover part of the rent and maintenance charges for the UNHCR headquarters, the Montbrillant Building, be redeployed to the UNHCR regular budget.

Posts

23.16 The estimated amount of $48,209,000 would provide for 89 posts in the Professional category and above (1 USG, 1 ASG, 2 D-2, 10 D-1, 19 P-5, 41 P-4/3, 15 P-2/1) and 131 General Service posts. This reflects the abolition of 24 General Service posts proposed as part of the streamlining of the administrative support staff in the Office.

Other staff costs

23.17 A provision of $2,020,000 is proposed for general temporary assistance to provide the Office with the ability to secure personnel on a flexible basis so as to enhance delivery of services.

General operating expenses

23.18 The sum of $1,142,000 formerly budgeted under section 26F, Administration, Geneva, will provide for the regular component of UNHCR headquarters expenditures for rent and maintenance, utilities, communications and insurance at the Montbrillant Building.

Supplies and materials

23.19 The amount of $88,800 formerly budgeted under section 26F, Administration, Geneva, will provide for a regular budget contribution to UNHCR expenditures for supplies and materials.